

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-12 EUR-12 NEA-11
AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 SOE-02 COME-00 DODE-00
EB-08 EPA-04 INR-10 L-03 NSF-02 NSC-05 NSAE-00
PM-05 ICA-20 OES-07 SS-15 SP-02 DOE-15 INT-05
AGRE-00 OIC-02 /185 W
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R 080842Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7284
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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DEPARTMENT ALSO PASS IIA AND AFR/SFWA

PARIS PASS OECD CLUB DU SAHEL FELL

E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: SENV, UNEP
SUBJ: ORGANIZING MEETING OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP TO COMBAT
DESERTIFICATION

REF NAIROBI 6850 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY AFTER PRELIMINARY JOCKEYING WITH WEO COUNTRY
DELEGATIONS, UNEP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TOBLA CONCEDED FIRST
PRIORITY OF CONSULTATIVE GROUP ORGANIZING SESSION (MAY 2-5)
WAS TO REACH CONSENSUS AGREEMENT ON CG'S TERMS OF REFERENCE
(TOR). TOR AGREED TO ON EVENING MAY 5, THOUGH NO GOVERNMENT
OR MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATION MADE EVEN TENTATIVE COMMITMENT TO
ASSIST ANY OF SIX TRANSNATIONAL PROJECTS PRESENTED
ON PILOT BASIS. STILL PILOT REVIEW OF THESE PROJECTS
MAY 3 AND 4 PROBABLY PERSUADED UNEP LEADERSHIP THAT QUALITY
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AND SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT NEEDED CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT
USDEL BELIEVES CONSULTATIVE GROUP COULD MAKE EFFECTIVE
CONTRIBUTION TO IMPLEMENTING ANTI-DESERTIFICATION PLAN
OF ACTION. BUT CG MUST EFFECTIVELY IDENTIFY EXISTING ANTI-
DESERTIFICATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES. CG ALSO SHOULD
SUPPORT LIMITED NUMBER OF NEW INTERVENTIONS, PARTICULARLY
IN RESEARCH, IN MOST SELECTIVE AND INNOVATIVEMANNER. END

SUMMARY.

2. FOUR-DAY MEETING TO ESTABLISH TOR AND REVIEW TRANSNATIONAL PROJECTS ON PILOT BASIS COMPLETED LATE EVENING OF MAY 5. CLEARLY SESSION WAS SCHEDULED PREMATURELY AND SUFFERED FROM VARIOUS PROBLEMS, I.E.: A) LATENT OPPOSITION FROM CERTAIN WEO COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY SWEDEN, UK, CANDADA, AND, AT END, FRG; AND B) INABILITY OF PARTICULAR GOVERNMENTS TO REVIEW TRANSNATIONAL PROJECTS OFFICIALLY IN THEIR CAPITALS DUE TO UNEP TARDINESS IN DISTRIBUTING REVISIONS. WITHIN THESE CONSTRAINTS WHICH WERE CONSIDERABLE, USDEL BELIEVES THERE IS BASIS FOR (A) LAUNCHING THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP, (B) PROBABLY SECURING BROAD PARTICIPATION FROM AMONG IMPORTANT BILATERAL AND MULTI-LATERAL DONORS AND (C) CONTINUING SUPPORT FROM A SURPRISINGLY LARGE CLUSTER OF UN AGENCIES. EXDIR TOLBA PREDICTS HE WILL WIN SUPPORT OF FAO, IFAD AND WORLD BANK AS COSPONSORING AGENCIES AND CORRIDOR JUDGEMENT IS THAT HE WILL DELIVER THEM IN DUE COURSE. USDEL HAS ITS DOUBTS THAT TOLBA WILL BE ABLE TO PERSUADE FAO'S SAOUMA TO BECOME COSPONSOR.

3. INITIALLY UNEP SECRETARIAT SEEMED HESITANT TO MODIFY FUNCTIONS, SCOPE OF WORK AND ORGANIZATION PROPOSED MAY 2 AT OPENING MEETING. THROUGH WEO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INTERVENTIONS, LATE MAY 4 EVENING SESSION REACHED GENERAL CONSENSUS ON REVISED TOR. TOLBA'S CENTRAL THESIS WAS THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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HE MUST FULFIL THE MANDATE GIVEN TO HIM BY RESOLUTION 32/172 OF DECEMBER 19, 1977. OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 10 OF THIS RESOLUTION AUTHORIZES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO CONVENE EARLY SESSION OF CONSULTATIVE GROUP TO ASSIST IN MOBILIZING RESOURCES TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION. WEO INSISTED UPON AND GAINED AGREEMENT THAT CONSULTATIVE GROUP WOULD ALSO "IDENTIFY EXISTING RESOURCES FOR COMBATTING DESERTIFICATION AND STIMULATE COORDINATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS CONCERNED." US DEL ALSO ACHIEVED LIMITATION OF SIZE OF GROUP TO APPROXIMATELY 20 PLUS 8 OR 10 CO-SPONSORING AGENCIES. LASTLY, GC VI WILL HAVE FULL AUTHORITY TO REVIEW FUNCTIONS, SCOPE OF WORK AND ORGANIZATION OF CONSULTATIVE GROUP SINCE WEO'S INSISTED THAT TOR POLICY STATEMENT BE PRESENTED TO GC VI AS ADDENDUM TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT.

4. SIX TRANSNATIONAL PROJECTS WERE HASTILY PRESENTED TO A RELUCTANT GROUP OF DONOR DELEGATIONS. CHAIRMAN TOLBA WAS EXPOSED TO A WIDE RANGE OF PROJECT CRITICISMS WHICH COULD BE BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

A. NONE OF THE PROJECT PROPOSALS HAD ADEQUATE TREATMENT

OF BENEFITS AND COSTS AND HAD FINESSED THE ISSUE BY INDICATING THEY WERE REGIONAL IN NATURE.

B. THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ANTI-DESERTIFICATION PROJECGS ARE CRITICAL AND WERE POORLY TREATED, WITH NO REFERENCE TO GROWING POPULATION PRESSURE ON MARGINAL SEMI-ARID LANDS.

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C. THE PROJECT PROPOSALS' ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WERE QUESTIONED IN MOST INSTANCES AND NEEDED FURTHER REFINEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE THE SOLAR INTEGRATED LIVESTOCK PROJECT FOR SAHEL AND SUDAN PROPOSED A 4.5 MILLION DOLLAR TASK FORCE COMPONENT OF NINE EXPERTS FOR FIVE YEARS. THIS TASK FORCE WAS NOT DESIRED BY CILSS AND NOT CONSIDERED IMPERATIVE BY MINISTER ABDULLA OF SUDAN; HASTILY CONVENED WORKING GROUP OF UNEP/CILSS/SUDAN ELIMINATED TASK FORCE

PROPOSAL ON THE SPORT;

D. PROJECTS APPEARED TRADITIONAL IN NATURE AND LACKED INNOVATION AND IMAGINATION. IF CONSULTATIVE GROUP TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY, CHAIRMAN TOLBA WAS TOLD THAT AGENDA OF MEETING SHOULD BE CIRCULATED MINIMUM OF THREE MONTHS BEFORE NEXT SESSION, INCLUDING PROJECT PROPOSALS, IF ANY, DEVELOPED WITH FAR GREATER PROFESSIONAL QUALITY THAN THOSE PRESENTED TO THIS SESSION. HE WAS FURTHER INFORMED

THAT THE ADEQUATE REVIEW OF A PROPOSAL REQUIRES THE BETTER
PART OF A DAY AND THAT HIS TRIAL EXPERIMENT WITH PROJECT
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REVIEW WAS FAR TOO RUSHED.

5. NO LEAR AGREEMENT REACHED ON HOW UNEP WILL IDENTIFY
EXISTING RESOURCES FOCUSSED ON ANTI-DESERTIFICATION
PROGRAMS, US DELEGATION STATED THIS ESSENTIAL IF CONSUL-
TATIVE GROUP TO FOLLOW BROAD MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES
BY EXISTING DONORS ALREADY UNDERWAY IN SUPPORT OF THE
ANTI-DESERTIFICATION PLAN OF ACTION. CHAIRMAN TOLBA ALSO
SEEMS UNCERTAIN OF UNEP'S POSSIBLE LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR
ANTI-DESERTIFICATION RESEARCH AND TRAINING, ALTHOUGH SUCH
A PROPOSAL MAY BE DEVELOPED FOR FUTURE SESSION OF CON-
SULTATIVE GROUP. HERE THE ROLE OF THE CONSULTATIVE
GROUP FOR INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH COULD PROVE
VITAL PROTOTYPE. SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD PERMIT UNEP'S

CG TO SUPPORT VISIONARY AND FOCUSED RESEARCH IN TWO OR
THREE SELECT RESEARCH STATIONS ON PIONEERING MEANS OF
COMBATTING DESERTIFICATION. OVER PAST 30 YEARS, UNIVER-
SITIES, INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS
AS WELL AS UNESCO AND FAO HAVE COLLECTED NIAGARA OF DATA
BUT CG TOLD IT NEEDS CONSOLIDATION AND PRAGMATIC RESEARCH
FCUS.

6. US DELEGATION USED SAHEL GREENBELT AND SAHEL SOLAR
PROJECTS TO ILLUSTRATE POSSIBLE ROLE IT COULD PLAY WERE
IT TO BECOME MEMBER OF CONSULTATIVE GROUP. LIKE OTHER
WEO DONORS, US ASSISTANCE EXTENDED ON BILATERAL BASIS.
US DEL UNDERSCORED EFFECTIVENESS OF CLUB DU SAHEL AND
CILSS ORGANIZATION ALREADY EQUIPPED
TO COORDINATE THESE TWO PROJECTS WITHIN SAHEL AND SUPPORTED
CILSS' IDRISSE'S ARTICULATE OPPOSITION TO ANY LARGER UNSO
SAHELIAN-SUDANO COORDINATION ROLE. CILSS' COORDINATION
WITH SUDAN COULD BE CARRIED OUT THROUGH PROPOSED PERIODIC
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MEETINGS OF A REGIONAL CONSULTATION COMMITTEE AND AN ADVIS-
ORY TECHNICAL COMMITTEE. USDEL CONFIRMED THAT BOTH PRO-
POSALS, WHEN REVISED, WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO AFR/SFWA AND
AFR/EA FOR THEIR REVIEW AND ONWARD TRANSMISSION TO FIELD
MISSIONS. US ALONG WITH MOST OTHER WEO DELEGATIONS MADE
ONLY TECHNICAL COMMENTS ON WAY THE OTHER PROJECT PRO-
POSALS COULD BE IMPROVED IN FUTURE. IT IS PRESUMED THAT

ALL SIX PROPOSALS WILL UNDERGO SUBSTANTIAL REVISION RESULT-
ING FROM CONSULTATIVE GROUP REVIEW.

7. US DELEGATION TO GC VI WILL BE PRESSURED BY EXDIR TOLBA
FOR USG TO BECOME EARLY MEMBER OF CONSULTATIVE GROUP.
BELIEVE USG SHOULD GIVE MEMBERSHIP QUESTION CAREFUL CON-
SIDERATION AND AGREE FIRST AS TO HOW USG COULD MAKE EFFECTIVE
CONTRIBUTION WITHIN TERMS OF REFERENCE NEGOTIATED THESE
PAST FOUR DAYS. USDEL INDICATED TOLBA'S MAY 15 DEADLINE
FOR JOINING CONSULTATIVE GROUP WAS VERY TIGHT AND MIGHT
PROVE DIFFICULT FOR USG TO MEET.
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